From Abraham to Abraham—and U Maung Maung: At Home in Bassein

By Ruth Fredman Cernea

Just outside of Bassein, in the rich delta region of the Irrawaddy River, village huts hover above the graves of Baghdadi Jews. Some graves stand openly in the village clearing; others have been incorporated into the huts, their large, rounded tombstones used as tables. A particularly interesting inscription is on the face of one tombstone: Beneath the words, "My Beloved Husband," are two names: "U Maung Maung" and "Abraham Farazh Judah Raphael."[1] Above the inscriptions is a cross, a loving mistake by his Burmese family, who felt the need for a religious symbol to bless the grave. The symbol was selected by Gladys, a devout Roman Catholic[2] and the former companion of Abraham Raphael's cousin, who is buried nearby. Gladys still lives in the large house where the Raphael family long prospered, and framed Hebrew writings still line the walls of the home. Knowing that Abraham was a Jew, like Jesus, it seemed fitting and caring to Gladys to place the cross above his names. This simple gravestone, hidden down a dirt path in a village far from any Jewish residence, is dense with meaning: It reflects many aspects of the Jewish experience in Burma and expresses the separation of Jews from, as well as their integration into, Burmese life.

Three years ago, Abraham Faraj Raphael's sister, Margaret Raphael Glicksohn of Kfar Sava, Israel, returned with her daughter Judy Pasternak to this home of her heart, to light candles at her brother's grave, and to reflect on her past at the graves of her mother, grandfather, two uncles, a cousin, and other Jews. She visited her childhood home and asked her Burmese (i.e., Buddhist)[3] half-sisters Miriam and Ruby,[4] and her brother's Burmese family, to please continue to look after the graves. In the Jewish cemetery in Rangoon, at her father Judah's grave, she whispered, "Papa, I'm back."

The story of the Raphael family reflects the strengths and vicissitudes of existence in West Bengal from the earliest Jewish settlement until the current day. It testifies to the courage and conviction of migrants from the Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth century as well as to how their descendents faced the exigencies of daily life when placed in very difficult situations. How Abraham Faraj Raphael became U Maung Maung is part of this story, as is his burial in this quiet village in the Irrawaddy Delta.

Margaret Raphael Glicksohn's visit brought forth fountains of memories, some very sad, some frightening, but others more joyful. The Burma she knew is a beautiful land of fruit and flowers, with a kind Buddhist society, where water jars still stand by the roadside to quench the thirst of a casual passerby. While England assumed the role of a potential, political Promised Land, there was no urgency to leave gentle Burma until the catastrophe that was World War II. She recalls her home in Burma with great affection and nostalgia: "Life was wonderful. We mixed with the Christians, Burmese, Hindus, Muslims, and Chinese, and we all got along very well together. There was no anti-Semitism out there. I miss Burma very much."[5]

From Baghdad to Bassein

The port of Bassein (today, Pathein) lies in a lovely area of Burma, an area of bright green paddy fields and verdant foliage, seventy-five miles along the Irrawaddy River from the Bay of Bengal. Bassein has long been a commercial center; ships carry rice and timber to Calcutta across the bay or to further points throughout Southeast Asia or even to Europe, or travel upstream along the Irrawaddy to Rangoon, Mandalay, or Yenangyuang. The potential for trade is what drew Margaret's grandfather, Abraham Raphael of Baghdad, to the small village of Bassein in the mid-nineteenth century. No matter that it was far from

other Jewish settlements in Burma, or three day's travel by ship to the relatively large Baghdadi Jewish community in Calcutta. He carried his Jewish world within him with certainty, like a compass pointed directly to Baghdad and its strong religious tradition. Here he could make a living; here he would create his own Jewish center. His son Judah, born and raised in Bassein, was even more at home in the delta; when his young wife died, at 21, he turned to his mother to care for his two small children, Margaret[6] and Abraham, whom the family called Eddie. In his loneliness, he turned to a woman from the village for affection and companionship. He lived with his Jewish family on Shabbat, the weekend, and holy days, and spent weekdays with his Burmese companion and their three daughters and son.

The history of the Raphael family in Burma is theirs only in its particularity; it also exemplifies the facts and cadences of the Jewish experience in Burma. Whether in cosmopolitan Rangoon or in the smaller commercial outposts throughout Burma where Jews resided—Pegu, Moulmein, Mandalay, Yenangyaung, Toungoo, Akyab, Maymyo, Bassein, Yandon, Mergui-Tavoy, Thayetmyo—Jews in Burma were anchored by Iraqi Jewish religious tradition while simultaneously re-forming themselves to become "Englishmen-in-exile." They lived in a land of dazzling golden pagodas, envisioning the ideal golden Jerusalem and the empire on which the golden sun never set, even while sharing the streets with the diverse populations that inhabited Burma in the latter half of the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries: Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims, Christians; Indians, Chinese, Parsis, British, and others; as well as the numerous tribal populations of the area such as the Karen, Shan, Mon, Kachin, and Padaung. They belonged to all these worlds, interacting with these populations on a daily basis, but especially, in the case of the British, also in imagination, desire, and political ambition. Above all, they belonged to the extended Baghdadi community that stretched from Bombay and Poona, through Calcutta to Dacca, Singapore, Shanghai, Hong Kong, Yokohama, and Surabaya.

The Baghdadis themselves were in fact an amalgamation of Jews from all parts of the Middle East. Some were descendants of the Jews exiled to Babylonia when the Babylonians conquered Jerusalem in 597 B.C.E.; this forced migration accelerated when the first Temple fell in 586 B.C.E. Other Baghdadis were Sephardim, descendents of exiles from Spain who settled in the lands of the Turkish Empire, which included present-day Syria, Turkey, Iraq, and Egypt; others came to Burma via Cochin in India or through marriage to Baghdadis. Some came from Persia. A few Baghdadis even had Ashkenazic (European Jewish) ancestry; Abraham Raphael's wife was the daughter of a Baghdadi mother and an Ashkenazi father who had fled to Baghdad at the time of pogroms in Poland.[7] Over time, these internal differences were subordinated to the strong Babylonian rabbinical authority based in Baghdad and maintained through rabbis sent from Baghdad, as well as by religious emissaries from Baghdad who collected charity for institutions there or in Jerusalem. These emissaries also reinforced history, tradition, and communication among the populations in the ports and trading centers of Southeast Asia. Some 13,000 Baghdadi Jews were scattered throughout the region.

At the time of Jewish settlement in Burma, Calcutta was the seat of the British Raj, and the Calcutta Baghdadi Jewish community—at 3,500—the largest and most prosperous of the Baghdadi settlements. Despite the distances between these communities, the Baghdadi Jews were actually one grand *kehilla*. The traditional ties of religion, trade, marriage, and language that reinforced their common history and destiny were enabled by the means of communication and trade being developed by the mercantile goals of the British Empire. The same ships that carried rice to Calcutta or Europe also carried Baghdadis to their relatives in India; boats carrying products upstream along the Irrawaddy also enabled people living away from Rangoon to convene in the grand synagogue there for holy days or for family and community celebrations and memorials.

Driven from his home in Baghdad by mounting persecution and plague, and drawn to the British Raj by economic opportunities and religious freedom, Abraham Raphael Ezekiel and his brother Judah moved southeast to Burma about 1840. Abraham and Judah were among the very first Jewish settlers in Burma, the first who came to stay, build families, and to cast their future in this unknown land. When they arrived, and for most of the stay of Jews in Burma, Burma was administered by the British as a part of West Bengal, but unlike most of Bengal, the majority of the population was Buddhist, not Hindu. For a few years, the brothers served as bookkeepers in the court of King Mindon in Burma's capital, Mandalay, but when the ruthless King Thibaw ascended the throne in 1878, they left Upper Burma. After a serious argument, Abraham and Judah separated. Judah Ezekiel settled in Rangoon, where he prospered as an agent for the British East India Company, became a benefactor to the synagogue and city of Rangoon, and where a street was named for him, Judah Ezekiel Street; Abraham Raphael further disassociated himself from his brother by dropping the name Ezekiel and settled in Bassein, where he became wealthy by trading in an eclectic range of goods and services: electrical supplies, furniture, guns, and general provisions; as an auctioneer; as the owner of an ice factory that provided ice throughout the delta area, and as the proprietor of two cinemas. He fathered two daughters and three sons, Margaret's father Judah, Jacob (Jack), and Raphael (John), all of whom stayed in Bassein to work with the expanding businesses. Over time, other Jews were employed in the Raphael businesses, and two other Jewish families moved to Bassein,[8] thereby creating a small Jewish community in the delta. Abraham Raphael died in 1906 at the age of 90.

Abraham Raphael's character, spirit, and determination can only be appreciated in context. While his relatives were making their way within the comfort of a growing Jewish community and an increasingly cosmopolitan city, Abraham was settling down in a very rural area of rice mills and paddy fields, 192 miles from Rangoon.[9] After several conflicts, the British had finally occupied Bassein District in 1852, an event that certainly influenced Abraham Raphael's decision to set up business there. The vast majority of the population of the 518 villages in Bassein District—as opposed to Bassein town—were Buddhists.

However, Bassein town had a different religious and ethnic composition. Several other religious and ethnic groups clustered within the town limits, including about 22,400 Christians, most of who were Karens who had been converted by the large American Baptist Mission, as well as a smaller number of Roman Catholics and Anglicans. The town also had sizable populations of Muslims, Hindus, and Chinese. Bassein town's population grew from 20,688 in 1872 to 31,864 in 1901.[10] It was a pretty place, largely wooded, with several grand British public buildings, the Queen Victoria Memorial Library, the Anglican Church, the Roman Catholic Church, convent and school; the extensive premises of the American Baptist Mission and beautiful public gardens. And, of course, the town of Bassein had several grand, gilded pagodas, the Shwemoktaw, the Mahabawdi, and the Shewezigon, and graceful pagodas also punctuated the verdant countryside.

Like other Jewish families in Burma, the Raphaels of Bassein carried their religious convictions with them wherever they went. Demographically insignificant in Burma, the Baghdadis might have been swallowed up by the seductive charms of Burmese life and hospitality or by the highly organized activity of Christian missionaries, in Bassein as throughout Burma. The British way of life did attract them and seemed to offer promise of a secure political future. However, unless they traveled the route offered by the missionaries and converted to Christianity—which was unthinkable—they could remain only just outside the door of the exclusive British club. Middle Eastern Jewish tradition not only kept them connected to their history and to the extended Baghdadi Jewish world, it also acted as insulation against such temptations. In this seemingly isolated setting, the Raphaels immediately established a ritually correct way of life. They brought a ritual slaughterer, a *shohet,* from Bombay, who also served as a cantor and the children's

religious and Hebrew teacher, as well as a salaried employee in the Raphael stores. The *shohet* was, however, much more than an employee: He and his family were part of the Raphael family, ate with them, and shared all family events and religious occasions. In creating this mini-Jewish world, the Raphaels acted exactly as did the Saul family in Mandalay, the Samuel family in Akyab, and similarly placed families: *shohet*, Hebrew tutors, and cemetery. Shabbat prayers were said in a *minyan* at home, and on major holidays, the Raphaels, like Jews throughout Burma, journeyed to the synagogue in Rangoon. As years went by, these very traditional Jews also played a role in civil society. In Rangoon in the early twentieth century, merchant Isaac Sofaer held a seat on the Municipal Council, the Sofaer family donated the gates to the Victoria Gardens and Memorial Park and Zoological Gardens, and Mordecai Hayim Isaac Cohen funded an ornate bandstand in the city's central Fytche Gardens. During the 1930s, Margaret's uncle, Raphael Abraham Raphael, MBE, KiH,[11] was honored by King George V and King George VI for services to England, was a member of the local Masonic Palm Lodge, and was mayor of Bassein for seven years prior to World War II.

British-run schools in Burma offered an education that opened the world of the West to young Jews in Burma, teaching them British literature, history, customs, and how to read and write well in English. It also impressed them with the glory of the British Empire and the desirability of a British way of life. British schools were in fact missionary schools, but Jewish children were exempt from religious instruction. In Bassein, Margaret and Eddie attended convent schools in the primary years, but for the upper grades, they moved in with relatives in Rangoon. Like other upper-class Jewish girls, Margaret attended the American-run Methodist Girls High School. In Rangoon, Margaret experienced the full cohesiveness of the Jewish community in Burma, bound tightly together by tradition, marriage ties, and common concerns. She also fully experienced the panoply of cultures that convened in British Burma. She recalls:

> Hanukkah, the Jewish Festival of Lights, always coincided with the festival of lights of the Hindu people. The streets were lit like fairyland. Sometimes, Christmas also came at this time, and you could see Christmas trees in Christian homes, Hanukkah lamps, lit with oil, in Jewish homes; and candles on the balconies of Hindu families. During this period also, the Burmese celebrated the Harvest Thanksgiving with a big carnival. Beautiful floats passed through the streets for hours, each float decorated with lights and flowers. There were Hanukkah parties, with much food and drink, and parties in the school, with food donated by the wealthier Jews.
>
> We lived in a country ruled by the British and we did take in some of their culture. Also living with Burmese people, Hindus, Muslims and Christians, we sometimes joined in the (non-religious) celebrations. The English New Year comes on the 31st of December. The New Year was celebrated by all. At the stroke of midnight, bells rang from the churches, the trains whistled, and many other noises were made to bring in the New Year. The famous Auld Lang Syne was sung where there was a crowd of friends, in the dance halls, at parties. At that moment it made no difference if you were a Jew, Christian, Hindu or Burmese.[12]

A Pilgrimage to Jerusalem

For these increasingly sophisticated and cosmopolitan Jews, Jerusalem remained their lodestar. In 1934, when she was 15, Margaret, her brother Eddie, her grandmother, her aunts Sarah and Hannah, and Hannah's husband traveled from Burma to Jerusalem on a spiritual/medical trip; they hoped that in this holy space, German Jewish doctors, fleeing Europe, might help Hannah conceive. The trip was, in fact, also a pilgrimage through

Baghdadi Jewish history and belief, for their route took them via Basra and Baghdad, thus investing Burma-born Margaret and Eddie with the religion, history, and memories of their ancestors.

The group traveled from Rangoon to Madras by boat, by train to Bombay, by boat to Basra. From Basra, they embarked on the time-honored Baghdadi "heritage tour" by going north to the traditional site of the Garden of Eden in al-Qurna, at the junction of the Tigres and Euphrates rivers. From there, it was a short distance along the Tigris River to the tomb of Ezra the Scribe, a traditional pilgrimage site for Jews of the Middle East. Much more than a respected figure in the Books of Ezra-Nehemiah, in Baghdadi history the priest and scholar Ezra is especially revered for his intellectual and social leadership during the last years of the Babylonian exile, as well as for his later role in the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem.[13] And so it was with profound respect and a feeling of connection to the recesses of personal history that Margaret and her family approached the large tomb with its glazed blue-tiled dome, removed their shoes, entered the large chamber leading to the grave, lit candles, and circled the wooden monument atop the grave, reciting the phrase, "I am lighting this lamp in honor of our master Ezra the Scribe." And then they kissed the monument. Jewish families such as the Raphaels were probably not the only visitors feeling awe at the tomb that day since, in the tradition of the Middle East, persons of other faiths might also pray there, believing in the spiritual power of any holy man.[14]

The trip was timed so that they might arrive at the tomb during the traditional period of visiting, between Passover and Shavuot, and enable them to be in Baghdad during the especially important week of Passover. The large Jewish community provided them with food for the holiday. Then it was three more days across the desert by car to Jerusalem. Margaret's grandmother cried when she reached the legendary city of Jerusalem, so central to Jewish yearning through the centuries. A surprise awaited them in Jerusalem. So far from home, they met another Jew from Burma, Ezra Saul from Mandalay who was making a similar journey to the Holy Land. And a seeming miracle did occur, for Hannah stayed behind in Jerusalem to give birth to a son.

A Handbag Made from a Python's Skin

The comfortable life that Margaret recalls came to a cataclysmic end with the Japanese invasion of Burma in 1942. The non-native populations were identified with the British; when the British Army collapsed before the Japanese onslaught, most of these "European" populations fled by boat or by foot to safety in India. In the delta, the Raphael family pondered their options, but when Margaret's grandmother refused to leave, the rest of the family, in turn, refused to leave her behind.[15] By this decision, they cast their lot with their neighbors and friends among the Burmese populations. Therein began a wartime saga of bombings, burnings, jungle refuge and village kindness, fear and hardship, and even moments of levity, all guided by family loyalty and structured, wherever possible, by the Shulchan Aruch, the Code of Jewish Law, which they carried with them into the jungle.

Eight members of the Raphael family—Margaret, Eddie, her father, her grandmother, her uncles Raphael and Jacob, her aunt Sarah, and her cousin Abraham—as well as the *shohet*, his wife and grandson, waited out the war. Knowing that the stockpiles of blankets, shoes, foods, and other commodities in their stores would be attractive to the invading Japanese, the Raphaels filled trucks with these materials and sent them to the nearby convent to be hidden and used for refugees from the fighting. Then they watched in horror, hands tied behind their backs, as the retreating British burned their stores and workshops so that nothing of value might fall into the hands of the Japanese.[16] They stood powerless while the Japanese bayoneted their photo of the British king and queen and sliced up their mattresses. The young girls were hidden from the invading troops. To the Japanese, the Raphaels were suspect, not as Jews, but as allies of the British, a charge

that was fomented by villagers jealous of the Raphaels' wealth. The Japanese threatened to confiscate their home; it was only through the intervention of an official in Rangoon, who endorsed the family, was that decree averted. But more than a house was to be lost: Together with the local priest, Margaret's Uncle John, R. A. Raphael, the proud mayor of Bassein, was arrested by the Japanese in late 1942, questioned, and imprisoned in Bassein for several months. He returned a broken man.

While they were permitted to remain in their home, they were required to cater banquets for the occupiers and their Burmese allies. But by 1944, heavy British and American bombing of the docks and storage facilities in the Bassein region also destroyed the back of their house and forced them to take refuge in an outlying village. Soon after, Jacob Raphael died, and was buried in the nearby Jewish cemetery. Despite the threatening situation, the burial followed traditional Jewish practice. The *shohet* knew the ritual procedures for burial and mourning, white cloth was located, and Margaret sewed her uncle's shroud, and despite the increasingly threatened situation, the group waited in the village for thirty days to erect a stone for the grave.

And then, they moved to hoped-for safety deeper into the jungle, where they lived for a year. Traveling by bullock cart, crossing a river by sampan—rowed by Margaret and Eddie—they reached a friendly village, all the while trying to comfort Margaret's distraught grandmother. They bathed in the river, wore shoes made of tire treads, and bartered for food. Though without medicine, they ministered to the villagers as best they could. Margaret's diary of the time marks the war years by their situation each Pesach. Eddie, brought up in luxury, traded the fish he caught for chicken and eggs for their Shabbat dinner, and hunted with the villagers. Python meat was especially prized, but to lure the python from the high trees, it was first necessary to kill a monkey to use as bait. Eddie participated in one of these python kills, but traded his portion of the meat for the skin, and had the skin made into a purse for Margaret. In Kfar Sava today, the python purse recalls a bright spot in this otherwise very awful, very frightening time.

Margaret Raphael Glicksohn, in Kfar Sava, Israel, with the python skin purse made by her brother Eddie during the war.

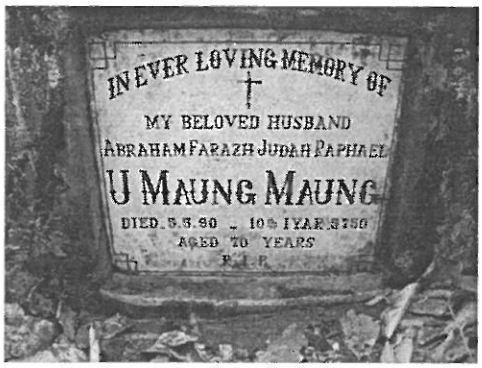
Late in 1944, the family heard their first outside news of the war via BBC and took heart from the music that was helping to sustain wartime Britain, such as, "There'll Always Be an England." Pesach in April 1945 was marked by extremely heavy bombing, and the family huddled together, repeating the traditional Passover question, "Why is this night different from all other nights?" But Pesach that year also marked the end of their ordeal, for soon after the Japanese retreated; in May the family returned home; and in June, British Army troops entered Bassein. In July, packages of food were dropped from the air, and finally, finally, the family received letters through the Red Cross from relatives in India.

After the War

The war was a watershed for the Raphael family, as for most Jews of Burma. Most Jews who fled Burma moved on to new lives abroad, in India, Israel, or England. Some 400 to 500 returned to Rangoon, hoping to resurrect the happy life they recalled there. After so many years of relative isolation from Jewish community, Margaret's grandmother insisted that she and Margaret move to the city so that finally she might live within a larger Jewish community. In 1948, Burma became independent of Britain, and the proud new nation

required that all citizens of Burma take a Burmese name. Unlike her brother, Margaret never became a Burmese citizen. In 1952, Margaret married a Polish Holocaust survivor whom she met through an international stamp collecting club, and she left Rangoon for London.

Eddie, now U Maung Maung, remained in Burma to care for elderly relatives, but ultimately it seems Burma was too entrenched in his being for him to ever leave Bassein. Eddie's Jewish family left for London, and he lived the rest of his life as a Jew among Buddhists and Christians, until his death in 1990. Like his father Judah before him, he took a Burmese companion, Daw Hla Kyi, and adopted Daw Hyla Kyi's daughter, Taung Taung Tin (T.T.T.). Today, in Pathein, Buddhist T.T.T. wears a gold chain with a menorah and a Star of David around her neck, a gift from Eddie.



Jewish cemetery near Bassein (Pathein): Eddie Raphael's tombstone.

By taking Burmese companions, these traditional Jews were acting much like the British. It is estimated that 90 percent of the British in Burma had mistresses.[17] It is uncertain how many Jews in Burma had similar arrangements, although anecdotal stories abound, and children of men who lived in Burma occasionally return looking for half-brothers and half-sisters they know of only through hushed family stories. What is known, however, is that in far-away Bassein, Abraham Faraj Judah Raphael's Buddhist companion, Daw Hla Kyi, and his adopted daughter Daw Taung Taung Tin still *kasher* chickens and light candles on Friday evenings, long after the meaning of these rituals has gone.

Acknowledgments

One's life story often seems so ordinary to the teller and so extraordinary to the rest of us. I had the extreme good fortune of corresponding with Margaret Raphael Glicksohn for several years and finally met her and her devoted daughter Judy Pasternak several times in Israel. I spent hours with them listening and appreciating not only the story but their warmth and good humor. They were extremely cooperative while writing my book (*Almost Englishmen*) as well as this account, by letter, personal conversation and e-mail. The story stands on its own, but the lovely people who facilitated my writing deserve to be acknowledged also for their kindness, hospitality, and humanity.

Notes

[1] Abraham Raphael's actual middle name is Faraj. The spelling on the tombstone is a mistake made by the stone carver, who apparently interpreted the sound of the final "j" as he heard it.

[2] Gladys's parents were also Roman Catholic, so she was raised in the religion.

[3] "Burmese" indicates "Buddhist." During the period under discussion, the identification was self-evident and the terminology interchangeable. Ethnic or religious groups within Burma—Christians, Jews, Hindus, Parsis—were never referred to as "Burmese," and tribes kept their own names in distinction from the dominant Burmans. Until Burma's post–World War II independence, there was no concept of inclusive Burmese citizenship or identification.

[4] Miriam and Ruby are names given by their father, Judah Raphael. Miriam's Burmese name is Daw Win May. Margaret doesn't know Ruby's Burmese name.
[5] Ruth Fredman Cernea, *Almost Englishmen*, 68.
[6] In Hebrew, Metuqa, "one who will grow old."
[7] Margaret is named after her great-grandmother, Margaret. Margaret's parents moved from Baghdad to Poona, India, where she was born.
[8] The Sofaer family and Salim Meyer. Both families left before the war.
[9] The distance was "shortened" considerably when a railroad between the cities was opened in 1902.
[10] *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol. 7: 117.
[11] MBE—Member of the Order of the British Empire, an award created by King George V in 1917 to reward individuals both in the United Kingdom and throughout the Empire who had contributed to success in World War I. KiH was the Kaisar-i-Hind Medal for Public Service in India.
[12] Cernea, *Almost Englishmen*, 67-68.
[13] Ezra is credited with establishing the primacy of the study of the Law, the Torah, as the most essential mode of Jewish communal thought, worship, and action. "Ezra-Nehemiah contains the memoirs left by the two leaders who organized Jewish life in Judea in the beginning of the Second Commonwealth....The Book of Ezra describes the activities of a new figure in Judaism—the scribe, who took the place of the prophet after the return of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity. The scribes (*sofrim*) made available copies of the Scriptures, and carefully interpreted and taught them to the people." Philip Birnbaum, *A Book of Jewish Concepts*, 462.
[14] In 1910, Farha Sassoon of Bombay, and her children, made a similar trip. Farha Sassoon described the tomb and procedure in detail and also recalled that, "Many give money for someone to bless them at the grave. ... The main time for visiting is between Pesach and Shavuot. ...Originally, the custom was to read by the grave the book of Ezra from a scroll, but this custom has stopped since Rabbi Yosef Hayim printed a book called Mamlechet Cohanim where he made a special order of readings and prayers to be read at the grave." "The Sassoons' Return Visit to Baghdad," *The Scribe,* No. 75: 20.
[15] How unusual this decision was can be appreciated by the fact that by autumn 1942 some 600,000 people had fled Burma. About 80,000 are estimated to have died on the way. Christopher Bayly and Tim Harper, *Forgotten Armies,* 167. One Jewish family remained in Mawbin, but most of the very few Jews who remained in Rangoon and Pegu seem to have been married to native wives.
[16] This was consistent with the general scorched earth policy of the British, who suffered an unprecedented military debacle in Burma.
[17] David Gilmour, *The Ruling Caste*, 285.

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